



A Message from **Mayor Sharpe James**

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REMARKS BY MAYOR SHARPE JAMES
AT THE NEWARK HOUSING AUTHORITY

SEPTEMBER 19, 1991



Together, we can make a difference!

REVEREND CLERGY, MR. ZINNERFORD SMITH, NEWARK HOUSING AUTHORITY CHAIRMAN, COMMISSIONERS OF THE NEWARK HOUSING AUTHORITY, MR. BENJAMIN BELL, ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MRS. MARY RONE, PRESIDENT, NEWARK TENANT'S ASSOCIATION, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE NEWARK HOUSING AUTHORITY COMMISSIONERS. I AM HERE WEARING MANY HATS TONIGHT. I ALSO BRING YOU GREETINGS FROM THE 9TH ANNUAL BLACK ISSUES CONVENTION (BIC), WHICH IS BEING HELD THIS WEEK AT THE RADISSON HOTEL IN NEWARK.

- (1) FIRSTLY, I AM HERE AT THE REQUEST OF THE HAYES HOMES TENANTS. HAYES HOMES IS IN NEED OF HELP FROM THE NEWARK HOUSING AUTHORITY. VERONICA SANDERS, PRESIDENT.
- (2) SECONDLY, I AM HERE TO REQUEST THAT YOU REVIEW, STUDY, AMEND OR DRAFT AN ACCEPTABLE NHA "TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROPOSAL" UTILIZING ESSEX COUNTY DOLLARS AND A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN BOTH PARTIES.
- (3) THIRDLY, I AM HERE TO SPEAK ON THE NEED FOR A PUBLIC HOUSING SUMMIT WHICH WOULD INCLUDE AN INDEPTH INSPECTION OF PUBLIC HOUSING, IDENTIFICATION OF AVAILABLE FUNDS AND AN ACCEPTABLE PLAN OF ACTION TO ADDRESS:

- NEW CONSTRUCTION
- REHABILITATION
- SECURITY
- MAINTENANCE
- RECREATION
- BEAUTIFICATION
- TENANT RELATIONS

ALSO, THERE IS A NEED TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE WAYS TO REDUCE VACANCIES. HUD NOW DEMANDS COST EFFICIENT MEASURES IN OPERATING PUBLIC HOUSING. THIS HAS BECOME A HUE AND CRY, WHEREBY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL NO LONGER SUBSIDIZE VACANT UNITS.

OF COURSE, MANY OF MY STATEMENTS HERE TONIGHT CALLING FOR ACTION MIGHT BE ON THE NHA DRAWING BOARD; A PROPOSED NHA PLAN, A DELAYED PLAN OR A PLAN SCHEDULED TO COMMENCE IMMEDIATELY. IF THIS IS TRUE I WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO INFORM THE PUBLIC OF YOUR PLANNED ACTION, AVAILABLE FUNDING AND TIMETABLE FOR COMPLETION. FOR TOO LONG THERE HAVE BEEN TOO MANY BROKEN PROMISES AND SHATTERED DREAMS FOR PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS. FOR TOO LONG WE HAVE CATERED TO SOME WHILE IGNORING OTHERS. OUR CHALLENGE IS TO MAKE THE NEWARK HOUSING AUTHORITY WHOLE. LET ME FOCUS BRIEFLY TONIGHT ON THE PLIGHT OF THE TENANTS AT HAYES HOMES.

THEY HAVE BEEN ADVISED THAT THE NEWARK HOUSING AUTHORITY PLANS TO CLOSE BUILDINGS 1 AND 3; AND THAT ALL TENANTS WILL BE CONSOLIDATED INTO BUILDINGS 5, 6 AND 8. THEY FURTHER HAVE MANY PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE GONE UNANSWERED.

PROBLEMS DUE TO THE ABSENCE OF ADEQUATE MAINTENANCE ON OUR RECENT TOUR WE FOUND MOST TENANTS HAD IMMACULATE APARTMENTS, FLOWERS, RUGS AND DECORATIONS. THEY WERE LIVING THE AMERICAN DREAM. YET, NEWARK HOUSING AUTHORITY MAINTENANCE WAS LACKING. WHAT WAS IN EVIDENCE, HOWEVER, WAS THE APPEARANCE OF UNSWEPT HALLS, DEBRIS, STENCH, AND MISSING LIGHT BULBS. PLAYGROUNDS THAT COULD PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR YOUTH WERE LINED WITH POTHOLES, CRACKS, LOOSE MACADAM, GLASS AND GRASS GROWING SKYWARD. BASKETBALL BACKBOARDS THAT COULD PRODUCE ANOTHER MICHAEL JORDAN, MOSES MALONE OR MAGIC JACKSON WERE MISSING BASKETBALL RIMS AND NETS AND WERE MARRED WITH RUST SPOTS. AND THEN WE COMPLAIN ABOUT OUR YOUTHS STEALING CARS AND LIVING A LIFE OF CRIME. WITH THIS BLATANT DISREGARD FOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR YOUTHS, WE TOO MUST SHARE SOME OF THE BLAME. NEVERTHELESS, TONIGHT THE HAYES HOMES TENANTS ARE ASKING FOR BASIC SURVIVAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, NOT JUST COSMETIC REPAIRS OR THE WHOLE PIE AT THIS TIME.

FIRSTLY, WHY MOVE FROM BAD APARTMENTS TO WORSE APARTMENTS?

SECONDLY, WHY MOVE FROM GOOD MODERNIZED APARTMENTS INTO NON MODERNIZED APARTMENTS?

THIRDLY, IF YOU CAN REPAIR BUILDINGS 5, 6 AND 8 FOR CONSOLIDATION, WHY NOT REPAIR BUILDINGS 1 AND 3 FOR CONSOLIDATION?

IF HEATING IS AN ISSUE IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS,
WHY NOT WAIT UNTIL YOU HAVE RECEIVED THE RESULTS OF THE
ONGOING CONTRACTED OUT NHA STUDY TO RECOMMEND HEATING
ALTERNATIVES FOR HAYES HOMES?

THIS STUDY MIGHT SUGGEST THAT:

WE CAN PROVIDE CENTRAL HEAT FOR ALL BUILDINGS

WE CAN PROVIDE CENTRAL HEAT FOR SOME BUILDINGS

NO CENTRAL HEAT PLANT BUT WE CAN PROVIDE PORTABLE
HEAT FOR ALL OF THE BUILDINGS

NO CENTRAL HEAT BUT WE CAN PROVIDE PORTABLE HEAT

FOR SOME OF THE BUILDINGS AND WHICH ONES

OR WE WILL BUILD A NEW CENTRAL PLANT OR INDIVIDUAL
PLANTS FOR HAYES HOMES

NO ONE AT THIS TIME KNOWS THE ANSWER.

MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOWEVER, WHY CAN'T HAYES HOMES TENANTS
PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS CONCERNING
THE QUALITY OF THEIR LIVES?

1. WHAT MONEY IS AVAILABLE?
2. WHAT ARE THE PRESENT PLANS?
3. CAN ALL THE BUILDINGS BE REHABILITATED?
4. IF NOT, WHY?
5. IF SOME BUILDINGS MUST BE CLOSED, WHY NOT ALLOW
ALLOW THE TENANTS TO SHARE IN THE DECISION MAKING?
6. A JOINT NHA/TENANT PLAN OF ACTION BASED ON MONIES
7. A JOINT NHA/TENANT PLAN TO LOBBY FOR ADDITIONAL
FEDERAL/PRIVATE DOLLARS